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R. quatenus omnibus Judeis Angliæ ne de cetero capitula teneant in Anglia. Et Peytevinū de Lincoln, Muriel quæ fuit uxor David de Oxon, Benedictum fil Peytevini de Lincoln, et Vaalyn et Mosseum de Barbuñ Judeos venire faciant coram prefato archiepiscopo et aliis de concilio R. in octabis scī Miche ubicunque fuerint in Anglia responsuri quare miserunt in Francia ad Judeos Franciæ pro capitulo tenendo super Judeos Angliæ. Et mandatum est predictis justic. quod non permittant predict. David de Oxon a Judeis distringi ad aliquam uxorem capiendā vel tenendā nisi de voluntate sua.”

A WRIT OF EDWARD I.

A SOMEWHAT novel and curious phase of Jewish religious life is discoverable in the Exchequer Plea Roll, No. 20, Membrane 3, anno 1275. We there find, *in extenso*, a writ under the Great Seal, directed by Edward I. to the Justices assigned to the custody of the Jews, informing them that the goods and chattels of Cok Hagin, a London Jew, had been confiscated to the Crown, and delivered over as a gift to Queen Eleanor. Cok Hagin had been excommunicated by the Rabbis for an offence against Jewish law, and such excommunication was tantamount to “felony” at Common Law. Hence the forfeiture of his possessions.

The Justices consulted former Rolls, with a view of ascertaining precedents, and they found that in 1270, Sadekin of Northampton had incurred the displeasure of his fellow-Jews, and had been excommunicated, remaining under anathema forty days and more. His goods had consequently been confiscated and handed over to Queen Eleanor.

The Justices, desirous of being set right on the matter, summoned a jury of twelve leading London Jews, and required them, under oath, to examine well the transaction, and report. They did so, and upheld the sentence and judgment of the Rabbis.

The jurors consisted of the following:—Gamaliel of Oxford; Sampson of Northampton; Aaron de la Rye; Benedict of Winchester; Peitavin of Northampton; Isaac of London, from Northampton; Poteman; Manser ben Aaron; Isaac the Evesk; Solomon Bunting; Bonenfaunt of Cruce-rois; and Moses le Blund. It is to be noted that London, then as now, possessed an attractive force for provincials. Two of the jurors, Aaron de la Rye and Solomon Bunting, were subsequently hanged on an alleged charge of clipping the coin.

King Edward thereupon desired Magister Elias, son of Magister Mosse, “Master of the Jewish Law,” to wait upon him, and acquaint him with all the facts. The “Master” obeyed the King’s behest, and

satisfied him that the excommunication had been truly justified, and that Sadekin had incurred the displeasure of the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities for a crime against Jewish ordinances.

The precedent having thus been established, the goods and chattels of Cok Hagin were estreated, and delivered into the hands of Queen Eleanor. What is most surprising, however, is the fact that, six years subsequently—in 1281—this very same Cok Hagin was appointed Chief Rabbi of all England, at the special request and demand of Queen Eleanor.

That the Rabbonim of London exercised the right of issuing excommunications is evident from an entry on the Patent Rolls (1250), running thus :—"The King to his Justiciars assigned to the Jews, greeting—Know that we have conceded to our London Jews that the Masters of the Law of the said Jews in the City of London may issue the high excommunication against all those Jews who have promised any subsidy towards maintaining their cemetery in London, and have failed to pay it : with this condition, that we, and none else, shall receive sufficient amends out of the Jews so excommunicated."

M. D. DAVIS.
